

Springfield, PA — Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7) today hosted the first Pennsylvania Seventh Congressional District Business Procurement Summit at the Springfield Country Club. Featured speakers at the Summit included Congressman John Murtha (D-PA), Chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee; Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee; and Vice Admiral David Architzel, Principal Deputy, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition. — While the District faces economic challenges, Delaware County--which comprises 85 percent of the District--has lost 762 of its net small businesses over the last six years, including 22 percent of its manufacturing establishments. To address this problem, Congressman Sestak has held a series of economic development summits since taking office in January. The Business Procurement Summit was the fourth in this series. Previous summits dealt with the topics of economic and workforce development, resources for local small businesses, and addressing the challenges facing working women and women small business owners and access to state and federal contracting opportunities.

More than 420 businessmen and businesswomen filled rooms to capacity at the District's first Business Procurement Summit, which featured exhibits by more than 40 large businesses and contracting officers from over 15 federal and state government agencies. Exhibitors included: Lockheed Martin; Boeing; AstraZeneca; AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.; the U.S. General Services Administration; the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, Homeland Security, Labor, and Energy; the U.S. Navy; the U.S. Small Business Administration; and the Pennsylvania Departments of General Services and Treasury. Many representatives of the exhibiting businesses and government agencies served as panelists in a series of training sessions held throughout the day. Attendees included representatives from dozens of area large and small businesses and area Chambers of Commerce.

"The significant interest in this Business Procurement Summit is indicative of the strong desire of local businesses—large and small—in seeking contracting opportunities with the federal government, and one another" said Congressman Sestak, who serves as Vice Chairman of the House Small Business Committee. "My district, which includes most of Delaware County and parts of Chester and Montgomery County, has a diverse cross section of small and large businesses. With this event, I intend to promote greater access to federal and large business contracting for my District's small businesses, which currently only receive 6.7 percent of all federal contracting dollars in the District, despite the federal government goal of 23 percent."

The event began with collaboration between Congressman Sestak and local Chambers of Commerce and local businessmen and women, including Jeff Vermeulen, President of the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce. Also participating in the planning for the event were Rob Powelson of the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry; Al Paschall of the Schuylkill Alliance Chamber of Commerce; Tim Phelps of the Main Line Chamber of Commerce; Joe Mahoney of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; and Rob Carullo of Strengthening the Mid-Atlantic Region for Tomorrow (SMART). Assisting in the organization of the event was Clyde Stolfus of the Procurement Technical Assistance Program.

During the course of the day-long summit, attendees participated in sessions on topics ranging from training on government marketing and doing business with Government Prime Contractors to responding to a government solicitations or proposal requests. In addition, the summit concluded with a panel discussion on regional economic development opportunities.

In addition to his work in the district, Congressman Sestak has drafted and voted in favor of legislation in Washington in support of small businesses. The Congressman is a co-sponsor of the Small Business Fairness in Contracting Act ( H.R. 1873) which would provide small businesses greater access to federal contracts. Currently, federal agencies must ensure that 23 percent of contracts are awarded to small businesses. The pending legislation increases the percentage of federal contracts that must be awarded to small businesses to 30 percent. In addition, Congressman Sestak authored an amendment to the bill, which stops U.S. government agencies from unfairly bundling small contracts into "mega-contracts," a practice that makes it harder for small businesses to compete due to the size of the bundled contracts.

The legislation also requires that the U.S. Small Business Administration provide information to small businesses interested in obtaining federal contracts regarding the total dollar value of government contracts awarded in the business' industry. This includes any small business that is registered on the Central Contract Registry, a national database of businesses seeking to obtain federal contracts.

In addition, he has passed The Small Business Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act to provide grants and entrepreneurial tools for critical management and technical assistance to small business owners, as well as the Small Business Trade Programs Act to provide trade assistance to small businesses to increase their exports, protect against unfair trade practices and provide assistance to business dislocated by trade.

Furthermore, the Congressman added an amendment to the Department of Defense authorization bill that requires market research to be conducted by the Department of Defense prior to awarding contracts of over \$1 million to ensure small business opportunities with cost-effectiveness.

"Seventy percent of all new jobs in this region come from small businesses," Congressman Sestak said. "Our economic security is dependent upon our ability to provide these businesses with the tools and resources they need to grow their businesses. By bringing these businesses together with federal agencies and procurement officials, we are helping them to find new avenues to improve their business, with the hope of bringing talent, investment, and economic prosperity to the Seventh Congressional District."